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Socio economic status of pet dog owners in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

A study was carried out to explore the socio-economic status of dog owners in Tirupati City of Andhra Pradesh. The study design involved the systemic personal interview of randomly selected 180 dog owners using a structured interview schedule. Hence the respondents were surveyed by multistage random sampling procedure. The result revealed that 47.22 per cent of young people were interested in pet dog rearing. About 52.77 percent respondents living in apartments owned pet dogs while 47.22 per cent were living in individual houses. Majority of the pet dog owners were students (42.77%) and businessmen (27.77 %). It was understood that majority of the nuclear (66.67 %) small families (size < 5) reared pet dogs as companion animals.

Keywords: Pet dog, pet owner, occupation, Tirupati, companion

Introduction

Dogs were the earliest members of the canine species that humans domesticated (Selby *et al.*, 1981) [5]. Pet dog population has been increasing in India from 19.41 million (2018) to 21.42 million (2019) and has been projected to further rise to 31.41 million in 2023 (Statista, 2022) [7]. The dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*) is the most preferred domestic mammal reared as pet, living in home as much-loved family member (Sawaimul *et al.*, 2009) [4]. History demonstrates that animals that naturally live in groups with a hierarchical social structure are the best suitable for domestication (Mathialagan *et al.*, 2015) [3]. For the care and management of their pets, the pet owners were willing to spend a small amount of money. Pet owners provide care and kennel facilities for their animals (Vijayakumar *et al.*, 2006) [8]. Dogs are devoted pets giving company and solace to their owners. Hence, loyalty and companionship is the hidden benefit of owning a dog (Bennett *et al.*, 2007) [2]. The influence of western culture and changing life styles in India has resulted in the growth of pet market. As per the India Pet Care Market Outlook, 2022 the overall India pet care market is expected to cross INR 10500 crores by the end of the year 2027-28. This indicates the importance of adoption of pet animal's especially pet dogs in particular. Urban population were more interested in pet dog rearing as compared to rural population. Similar trend of pet ownership has been observed in Tirupati where large numbers of pet dogs, about 250 visit the clinics of Veterinary College, Tirupati daily. The breeding and management of dog depends upon the socioeconomic status of dog owner. Hence, present study has been carried out to assess the socio-economic status of dog owners in Tirupati.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in clinics of College of Veterinary Science, Tirupati between August to November 2022. About 180 respondents (dog owners) were selected using simple random sampling method. A structured interview schedule was prepared after discussion and consultation with the subject experts. Data was collected through the personal interview method and then compiled, tabulated and analysed by using standard statistical tools.

Results and Discussion

The present study revealed that majority of the pet owners were young below 35 years (47.22%) followed by middle age (35-50 years) and old (>50 years). This indicated that young people preferred owning pet dogs as compared to other aged people. Young people included more of students and business men. It could be inferred that young generation were more interested in pet rearing animals and were also supported by their elders. These results were in agreement with Singh and Gujar, (2022) [6].

From this study it was observed that above 55% of the pet dog owners were male and 45% were females. This figure clearly reflects that even females were enthusiastically involved in pet dog care and management. However the gender % revealed that males were slightly more involved in pet dog ownership. This may be attributed to the male owner's higher activity at outdoor works such as taking the dog for a walk or health check up to the veterinary clinics. This was similar to the results concluded by Balan *et al.*, (2015)^[1].

The study on the marital status of pet dog owners revealed that majority of them are unmarried (66.67%) and included the young pet dog owners who were studying. The married (33.33%) pet dog owners revealed that their family members assisted them in pet dog care and management. Similar result was concluded by Sawaimul *et al.*, (2009)^[4].

The results of education status of Pet dog owners showed that about 28.33% of the pet dog owners had only secondary education, 27.22% were under pre graduation category, and only about 8.33% completed graduation. On comparing the overall education status of pet dog owners it was found that majority of them had only secondary education. It was observed from the study that majority of the pet dog owner

were students (42.77%) followed by business men (27.77%). Further it was observed that people living in nuclear families with a small family size (Table 1) preferred to keep a pet dog. This could be due to the fact that pet dog rearing involves higher expenditure and it is difficult for the large families to spare the budget towards pet dog. Also, small sized families owned pet dogs mostly as a companion animal and as an object of attachment to reduce their stress.

About 100 respondents lived in their own residence while others rented out an apartment (19.44%) and individual house (25%). Therefore people residing in their own premises opted to own pet dogs were higher as compared to others due to the free space available for pet dog's maintenance. Moreover, the respondents who owned houses did not have a concern related to transport of pet dogs during shifting of houses as in case of residence of rented houses.

Among the total sample pet owners, 44.44% belonged to medium income group with earnings in the range of rupees 3-6 lakhs per annum and followed by high income group (33.33%) with more than rupees 6 lakhs and low income group (22.22%) with earnings of less than rupees 3 lakhs.

Table 1: Socioeconomic variables of the respondents

Factor	Levels	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Age	Young(<35 years)	85	47.22
	Middle(35-50years)	55	30.56
	Old(>50years)	40	22.22
Gender	Female	80	44.44
	Male	100	55.56
Marital Status	Unmarried	120	66.67
	Married	60	33.33
Education status	Illiterate	10	05.56
	Read only	14	07.78
	Read and write	17	09.44
	Primary education	24	13.33
	Secondary education	51	28.33
	Pre graduation	49	27.22
	Graduation and above	15	08.33
Occupation	Students	77	42.77
	Private	35	19.44
	Business	50	27.77
	Government service	10	05.55
	Retired	08	04.44
Family type	Nuclear	120	66.67
	Joint	60	33.33
Family Size	<5	137	76.11
	>5	43	23.88
Residential Accommodation	Owned Apartment	60	33.33
	Owned Individual House	40	22.22
	Rented Apartment	35	19.44
	Rented Individual House	45	25.00
Annual income	Low(<Rs.3 lakhs)	40	22.22
	Medium (Rs.3-6 lakhs)	80	44.44
	High (>Rs. 6 lakhs)	60	33.33

Conclusion

Present study revealed that most of the respondents we experienced in pet dog care and management. Majority of pet owners were males and belonged to young age either studying or involved in business. Among the respondents most of them belonged to middle income group followed by high and low income group respectively. Hence the study showed that the young people of Tirupati city under the middle income group

were more interested in pet dog care and management.

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